

ABSTRACT

A cushion that includes a cushioning element. The cushioning element has a number of substantially parallel elongate columns formed in a gelatinous cushioning media. The columns are configured so that when a force is applied to the cushioning element in a direction that is generally parallel to the longitudinal axes of the columns, the cushioning element will yield by a combination of compressability of the cushioning media and bucklability of the walls of the columns. In particular, the walls of columns which are located beneath a protruberance on an object being cushioned tend to buckle, permitting the cushioning element to conform to the shape of the cushioned object while evenly distributing a supporting force across the contact area of the cushioned object and avoiding pressure peaks. The preferred cushioning media is a gelatinous elastomer or gelatinous viscoelastomer. Various configurations of cushioning elements, including sidewall supports, are disclosed.